

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS CAIRO 002892

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [SNAR](#) [KCRM](#) [EG](#) [UNCRIME](#)

SUBJECT: EGYPT: GOE MAY BE CHANGING TUNE ON COE CYBERCRIME CONVENTION

REF: A. CAIRO 02469

[B](#). STATE 26851

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

[1](#)1. (U) On April 12, DOJ Computer Crimes expert Christopher Painter met with Assistant Minister of Justice Iskandar Ghattas to discuss the GOE's support for a proposed United Nations-sponsored global convention on cybercrime, as opposed to USG support for the Council of Europe (COE) Convention on Cybercrime (reftels).

[1](#)2. (SBU) Ghattas expressed his opinion that cybercrime is "just as dangerous as terrorism," that developing countries are most vulnerable to cybercrime because they lack experience in dealing with it, and that he understood "big countries" such as the U.S. were not interested in discussing the problem in an international forum. Painter agreed that the problem was serious and growing worldwide, and clarified that the USG was indeed interested in dialogue. However, the issue was not one of whether cybercrime was an international problem, but whether there should be a U.N.-sponsored global convention.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Painter explained USG support for the COE Convention, which took five years to develop, and which was comprehensive, flexible in its applicability to individual countries' legal systems, and efficient. Painter noted that the world could not afford to spend another five years negotiating a different convention while cybercrime further developed, and that the resources needed to negotiate a new convention could be better spent on improving individual countries' capacities to fight cybercrime. Participants in the COE Convention, Painter said, could continue with global dialogue even after ratifying the agreement. He noted that Egypt could take a leadership role in the region through its support for the Convention as a good starting point for tackling the problem.

[1](#)4. (SBU) Ghattas inquired as to how the USG and GOE might cooperate in fighting cybercrime. Painter responded that - subject to resource availability - continuing USG assistance programs, whether technical or legal, could be productive, and the USG would like to enlist Egyptian support in the task of convincing other countries to join the COE Convention.

[1](#)5. (SBU) A smiling Ghattas indicated his acceptance of Painter's arguments on support for the COE Convention with a simple "okay," and suggested that the USG and GOE might sponsor a regional "seminar" for the purpose, possibly in conjunction with the COE or even the U.N. When Poloff inquired on the likelihood of U.N. participation in a program supporting the COE Convention rather than a U.N. convention, Ghattas responded that the U.N. position had shifted; the U.N. no longer was pressing for a new global convention but simply wanted to ensure the cybercrime issue was addressed internationally.

[1](#)6. (SBU) Comment: Ghattas is not the final arbiter of GOE policy but his support undoubtedly will help the USG case. The apparent ease with which he reversed position from his previous opposition to the COE Convention (reftels) most likely reflects his perception of a modified U.N. stance. End comment.

[1](#)7. (U) Mr. Painter cleared this cable.

Visit Embassy Cairo's Classified Website:  
<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/nea/cairo>

You can also access this site through the  
State Department's Classified SIPRNET website.

GRAY